REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13-15 and 25-31 will be pending with claims 1 and 31 being in independent form. Reconsideration of the Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13-15 and 25-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,023,683 to JOHNSON et al. alone. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As explained in the previous Amendment, the invention uses a computer implemented Order Interceptor that preprocesses Electronic Sales Orders (ESOs) before being sent to a sales order system which provides many advantages over the prior art systems. In general, the preprocessing of information with the Order Interceptor prior to the submission of the actual sales order to an order processing system allows for an asynchronous availability check with any third party Available to Promise (ATP) packages, which may be running on a remote server. This asynchronous check with an ATP planning and forecast engine determines if material is available for a given quantity or delivery date; the result of which is to determine key information about the sales order, e.g., the sales organization or distribution channels involved in providing the material or items, prior to the actual processing of the order. Based on the ATP result,

the Order Interceptor is capable of modifying the ESO or even split the ESO into multiple requests. For example, if several line items are supplied by different delivery plants with different criteria, the ESO can be divided into multiple ESOs. This clearly provides efficiencies to the sales order system, compared to prior art systems.

In addition to supporting third party availability checks and splitting ESOs, the pre- processing Order Interceptor provides a robust set of business rules that allows a supplier to configure how a request is managed. The use of these rules prevents subsequent problems in deliveries and keeps parties in conformance with agreements. This also provides efficiency to the ordering process.

The Order Interceptor also provides for a Workbench component that allows any ESOs held for review to be viewed or edited. This is all performed prior to the processing of the order. By way of embodiment, the Workbench provides a customer purchase order view of the ESO that looks, feels and behaves like actual order entry screens. In addition to displaying the ESO, the Workbench displays messages generated from the order interceptor pre-processor describing why the ESO was held for review. The Workbench branches to an appropriate data correction screen and may present specific segments in the ESO for correction. This process continues until all messages are corrected or marked reviewed. The supplier can then decide to accept the request, reject the request, or accept individual line items. If the request is ultimately rejected, another feature of the Order Interceptor generates a reject acknowledgment

without forwarding the ESO to the order processing system. In other words, the order will be stopped prior to the processing thereof, saving time and expense.

In essence, the Order Interceptor receives an order from a customer and proceeds to apply business criteria to the ESO in order to automatically check the ESO and provide corrections or alterations (if necessary) based upon the particular customer that is placing the order. The Order Interceptor can automatically verify the integrity of the ESO or alter the ESO fields based on business criteria previously established for the submitting customer, including generating multiple ESOs as necessary based upon third party ATP information. If the ESO, as submitted, contains errors that are automatically uncorrectable, a workbench feature permits manual intervention to adjust items and fields at different ordering stages prior to transmitting to the order processing module, of any system. All of this occurs prior to anyone or more ESOs being routed to an order processing system. In essence, these features and functions are collectively called a pre-processor that performs the unique pre-processing as discussed above. The pre- processor and pre-processing are independent of the sales order system and provide distinctly valuable functions. They are not merely a separation of sales order functions. as suggested by the Examiner.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection over
U.S. Patent No. 6,023,683 to JOHNSON

In rejecting the claimed invention over JOHNSON, the Examiner asserted that:

> [JOHNSON] clearly anticipates all of the substantive elements of the instant invention, except that the system of [JOHNSON] is an integrated, unitary system, performing all necessary processing steps/functions, whereas the system contemplated by the instant invention, while performing exactly the same

steps/functions overall, merely splits the various processing steps/functions out into two separate modules or processing systems, a "pre-processor" and a "processor," in order to improve overall system performance/throughput.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's general assertion that JOHNSON anticipates or renders obvious all of the substantive elements of the instant invention. In particular, Applicants submit that JOHNSON does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in at least independent claims 1 and 31.

Independent claim 1 recites, for example:

> an order interceptor receiving and pre-processing electronic sales order data prior to transmitting to the order processing system, the order interceptor being capable of adding, changing and deleting electronic sales order data, wherein changes to an electronic sales order are logged so as to provide an audit trail of activity.

Additionally, independent claim 31 recites, for example:

> an order interceptor receiving and pre-processing electronic sales order data prior to transmitting to the order processing system, wherein pre-processing the electronic sales order includes splitting the electronic sales order into at least two separate requests prior to transmitting to the order processing system.

First, JOHNSON does not disclose or suggest an order interceptor that receives and pre-processes electronic sales order data prior to transmitting to the order processing system such that the order interceptor is capable of adding, changing and deleting electronic sales order data, much less, that changes to an electronic sales order are logged so as to provide an audit trail of activity. Indeed, the Examiner has failed to identify any language in JOHNSON which even remotely discloses or suggests this feature. Applicants acknowledge that, on page 6 of the instant Final Office Action,

the Examiner asserts that this feature is taught at col. 15, lines 60-62 of JOHNSON. However, this assertion is without merit. The noted language of JOHNSON merely states the following:

> Electronic sourcing system 5 also contains the capability to log messages returned from inventory sourcing program or programs 44B of Fisher RIMS system 40.

Clearly, such language is hardly suggestive of an order interceptor that receives and pre-processes electronic sales order data prior to transmitting to the order processing system such that the order interceptor is capable of adding, changing and deleting electronic sales order data, much less, that changes to an electronic sales order are logged so as to provide an audit trail of activity.

Second, JOHNSON does not disclose or suggest an order interceptor receiving and pre-processing electronic sales order data prior to transmitting to the order processing system, wherein pre-processing the electronic sales order includes splitting the electronic sales order into at least two separate requests prior to transmitting to the order processing system. Indeed, the Examiner has acknowledged as much on page 4 of the instant Final Office Action. Furthermore, while Applicants acknowledge that, on page 4 of the instant Final Office Action, the Examiner asserts that this feature "is certainly [a] well known", the Examiner has failed to identify any prior art document which would support this assertion.

Applicants note that the system of JOHNSON relies extensively on human manual interaction to search catalog databases and to *subsequently build an order.* As

a result, JOHNSON does not teach intercepting or receiving a "completed" order submission and checking for portions of the sales order that can be satisfied as recited by claim 1 of the invention or, for example, automatically checking and processing the order against pre-existing business as recited in claims 3 and 8. Nor does JOHNSON teach automatically correcting the order against business rules as recited in claim 6. JOHNSON also does not disclose a means for automatically detecting errors, and providing a means for editing, or updating an order submission, as does the present invention in claims 3, 4, 6,8 and 11.

Thus, JOHNSON is unrelated to the instant invention. JOHNSON is directed to providing an "ability to search multiple catalogs from different suppliers" (page 4, lines 46-47). More specifically, JOHNSON is directed to an electronic sourcing method and system that provides *a user* with tile capability of searching a database containing data (including product/vendor identification, and other product information) relating to items available from at least two vendor product catalogs. It also has tile capability of transferring tile product information for desired catalog items obtained as a result of tile search to a requisition/purchasing system for use in generating a requisition including entries for the desired catalog items.

Applicants do not dispute that JOHNSON is capable of creating an order list including desired catalog items available from vendor product catalogs as a result of such a database search. To provide these functions, JOHNSON shows a computer that maintains a catalog database including product information relating to catalog items

available from vendor product catalogs, and a means for generating a requisition including at least one requisitioned item. Information at least partially identifying an item desired to be requisitioned is entered *manually by a user,* and utilized for searching the database for catalog items matching that information and for selecting at least one item as a result of the search. Data identifying the selected catalog items are communicated to the requisition building module, which generates a requisition including entries for items corresponding to the selected catalog items. Additionally, JOHNSON may check the availability of one or more inventory locations of the corresponding catalog items (See, cols. 2 and 3). However, these features are not suggestive or the features recited in at least claims 1 and 31 and the Examiner has not demonstrated otherwise.

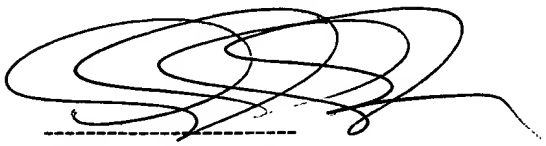
Accordingly, Applicants submit that JOHNSON does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in the above-noted claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required.

Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,
M. S. BRIGHT et al.



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